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- citizens and the winnipeg plan
- progress in the u.s.
- planning books and conferences

2169

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community planning: citizenship at work

This Association, a recent Royal Bank letter reminds us, believes "that common values and responsibilities in citizenship can be demonstrated clearly by greater attention to the community's stake in the creation of its physical environment". We shall achieve the kind of physical setting that we *as citizens* think towards and work for. It is readiness to think and work for the community that makes us its citizens, rather than merely its inmates.

The trick is to find effective ways to fit citizen thinking into the planning process. No single way works best all the time and everywhere. Men and women may freely join together to examine and draw attention to their community's planning problems; they may succeed in getting the planning process officially initiated. They may then stand behind the official helmsmen to help them keep on the course of public interest, and to justify that course. Such a voluntary group of watchers-on-deck need a willingness to work and learn, and a sense of responsibility to their community. This group should be a CPAC Branch.

The official planning agency needs information about the community's changing fabric, and especially about its rapidly changing needs. For sources of this information the agency may need to go far beyond its own members—whose number and qualifications are often defined by provincial law. For quantitative data on the community's growth and needs there are social and physical surveys; provincial and federal governments can often help with this part of the job.

But no government bureau can read from its files the local human experiences and aspirations on which planning must also be based. Only community groups who are doing things, and keeping their eyes open, will know the community's potentialities — and the frustrations imposed upon them by the existing fabric of sticks and stones. People from such groups can help guide the community to new freedoms by purposeful re-arrangement of its sticks and stones — that is, by physical planning. To tap this wisdom, the planning agency has only to invite representative citizens from such groups to bring to advisory committees their first-hand knowledge. This has happened in metropolitan Winnipeg, and the chief article in this issue tells the story.

CPAC Membership will in time prove an additional qualification in such committees, as in planning boards, local, provincial and federal governments. Many citizens elected to them have long been active in similar associations; they will welcome the growing knowledge and sharpening vision of Canada's physical development that are the principal assets of this Association. To invest those assets locally, by whatever means, is in the words of our Charter "to foster public participation in community planning".

community planning association of canada, ottawa

a way for citizens to share in planning

by Eric Thrift

We recognize citizen participation in planning as the desirable state of affairs in Canadian communities. This particular kind of participation is no more than an application of that familiar process, the democratic way of doing things, to the special problems of longer term civic foresightedness. To succeed in that application is CPAC's reason for being. The aim is to clarify in the mind of the man-in-the-street the possibilities for himself and his children that are inherent in his own neighbourhood and community; and to enlist his aid in determining those possibilities and carrying out a course of action that will lead to the greatest health, prosperity and satisfaction for himself, his fellow-townsmen and their families in the years ahead.

We have seen two kinds of citizen groups playing a part in the planning of their communities. One of these is the voluntary association—whether a Branch of CPAC or a local body with like aims—which the individual freely joins to advance sound planning for his community. This voluntary group is often the clearing-house for other groups interested in planning for special purposes (housing, recreation, education and so on). It can assist in the formation of an official planning agency, and bring to that agency a steady stream of intimate local knowledge and considered judgment. It can serve as the opinion-proving-ground for proposals developed in the course of the official agency's work—for those proposals are generally wasted unless they earn wide support.

A second kind of citizen group is the semi-official citizen advisory committee. It is usually appointed by the local planning authority from members of the community known to be exceptionally qualified to advise on specific aspects of the planning work. I do not for a moment suggest that there is room only for either the voluntary group or the semi-official advisory group in any community. There is room for both groups, and the sooner we have both the better will be the result of our planning efforts.

the author

Eric W. Thrift was born in Winnipeg in 1912, and went to school there; he received the degrees Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Manitoba and Master of Architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has served in a number of architects' offices, and on the staffs of the Hudson's Bay Company and the U. of Manitoba School of Architecture. He directed planning studies of four towns as pilot post-war projects for the government of Manitoba. For the past three years he has been Director of the Metropolitan Plan of Greater Winnipeg.

Mr. Thrift is a member of many professional planners' societies; and his concern for public participation in the planning process is evident both in that he was present at the conference at which CPAC was brought into being, and in the success with which he has related citizen advisory committees to the planning picture in Winnipeg. The program committee for the 1947 National Conference on Community Planning asked him to describe the Winnipeg method in Montreal; this article is based on his report.

In the development of plans for Metropolitan Winnipeg, it has been the policy of our Joint Executive Committee to profit throughout our work from the ability and knowledge of citizen groups of the advisory type. The object is to pool the experience and thinking of those citizens most competent to consider various special problems of planning, and then to incorporate that thinking into the greater Winnipeg of the future. The community as a whole thus gains cumulatively from the study and suggestions of so great a number of people that they could not possibly be consulted all at one place and time.

When we began to seek the aid of these groups, there was in Winnipeg no such body as this Association to whom the planning agency could turn for help. We therefore began by listing the salient aspects of the planning job on which the official agency needed special advice. Then we listed over 100 organizations in the metropolitan area likely to include people competent to deal with one or more of these aspects. The organizations embraced business, church, women's, recreational, educational and other special-interest bodies. They were provided with suggestions as to the kind of ability likely to be most useful to the planning agency, and asked to make nominations to the various advisory committees. The agency itself nominated a number of individuals, and from the whole list of nominations the committees were chosen.

I shall try to give some idea how the committees operate, and to relate frankly the advantages and disadvantages of the method as we have used it in Winnipeg. It may be convenient to discuss the citizen advisory committees in relation to three other elements: (a) The Planning Commission itself, (b) the Commission's technical staff, and—not least important—(c) The resultant output in the form of plan and program.

To the Planning Commission

Citizen advisory groups bring at least four main benefits to the table of the official planning board. First, no Board can be all things to all men. The commission's sometimes limited collective experience in a particular field of study can be greatly magnified by the application to its problem of the lifetimes of personal experience possessed by the advisory citizen-specialists. The official board retains the last word on each question; but it does not pretend to know the last word at the outset.

Secondly, the advisory committee can provide criticism and suggestions to the official board as the technical work proceeds. The special committee is a ready-made testing-ground composed of those in the community most acutely interested in the efficient accommodation of the particular activities which are their day-to-day concern.

Thirdly, there are in planning, as in every civic enterprise, some matters which are bound to remain



subject to differing opinions. The advisory committee will often bring contrary opinions forcibly into the light when they might otherwise have been overlooked by the official board until too late. It happens that compromise is apt to prove easier before important figures or institutions have publicly committed themselves, even on irrelevant grounds, to positions from which they cannot retreat.

Members of the advisory committee are usually representatives from sizable groups in the community. The committee is thus a way of communicating between the community's planning activity and its operational activities. This liaison brings great numbers of citizens into the planning orbit—and great numbers of ideas. Of course not all community organizations have the structure or pattern that will make the most of these opportunities for two-way communication.

It must be admitted that the official board, which is an executive body and is reasonably expected to produce schemes, does at times find that citizen advisory committees are anything but an expediting influence. The effect of these committees is upon the *quality* of the planning proposals, while the *quantity* of the board's output of recommendations is the easier target for unfriendly comment.

To the Technical Staff

The co-operation of a number of advisory committees is of great value to the technical personnel in the planning office, and has a profound effect upon the organization of its work. Citizens Advisory Committees in Winnipeg usually meet in the planning office, with one or more members of the staff present. The latter prefer to let the advisory committee come to its own conclusions, the professionals attending chiefly to the supply of required information.

While the staff may bring to the advisory committee proposals into which a great deal of work has gone, technicians are also encouraged to bring with them an attitude receptive to the value of detailed knowledge and specialized experience contributed by committee members. When that contribution has been embodied in the schemes the technician can have more confidence in them—both as to features of his own devising which have passed committee scrutiny, and as to the greater worth of the whole by reason of the details hammered out in committee consultations.

We believe the staff gains directly in ability to explain its work by having the preliminary trial in a friendly but critical committee. Attitudes, misapprehensions and even deliberate distortions are occasionally reported in these first stages which might prove embarrassing if hidden until the more formal meetings of the official board and of municipal and city councils. Frank and full discussion of the relationship of special pressures and interests to the planning purposes of the metropolitan community can take place in the advisory committee—provided the special interests are adequately represented in its composition. The conclusions of committees will find their way into many minds outside. Of course this takes time, and there is always the risk that the narrower interest may be more convincingly or forcibly advanced—but that danger is not peculiar to advisory planning committees.

Effect upon Planning Proposals

If advisory citizen committees extend the range of the official board's knowledge and the precision of its judgment; if they impose a certain flexibility of mind (and more practised eloquence) upon the professional staff; if they help in the dissolution of imagined objections and the recognition of real ones while the proposals are still in a relatively fluid state, those are all ways of saying they contribute to better planning. The existence of such committees reduces the likelihood of inopportune or ineffective recommendations, which once made cannot be erased from official records—nor from the unwritten tally of the worth of planning activity kept in the public mind. At the same time the endorsement of specific proposals by community leaders known for their public spirit and occupational experience must count for much with all those (and it would be foolish to minimize their number) who are not inclined to look any further into planning matters.

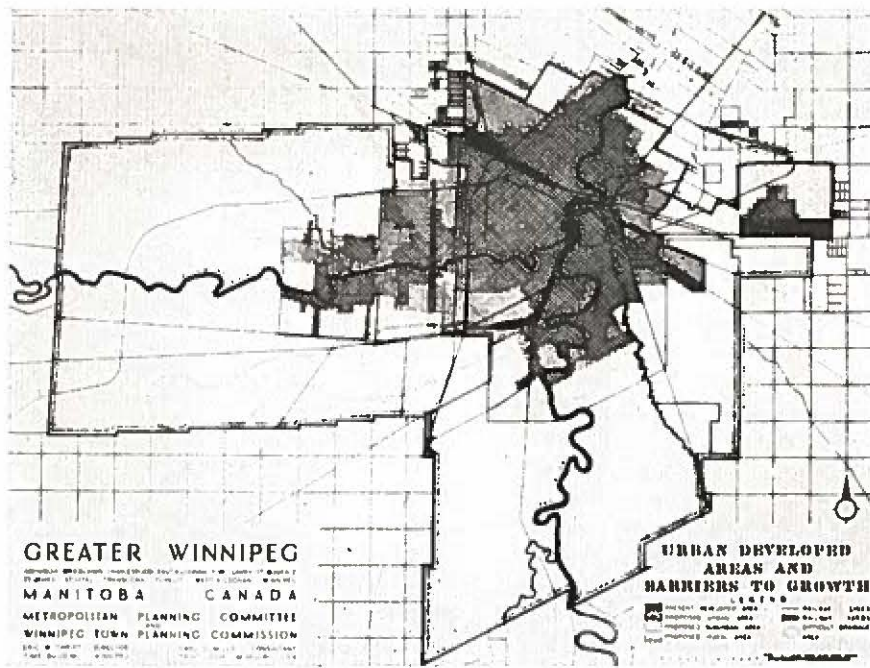
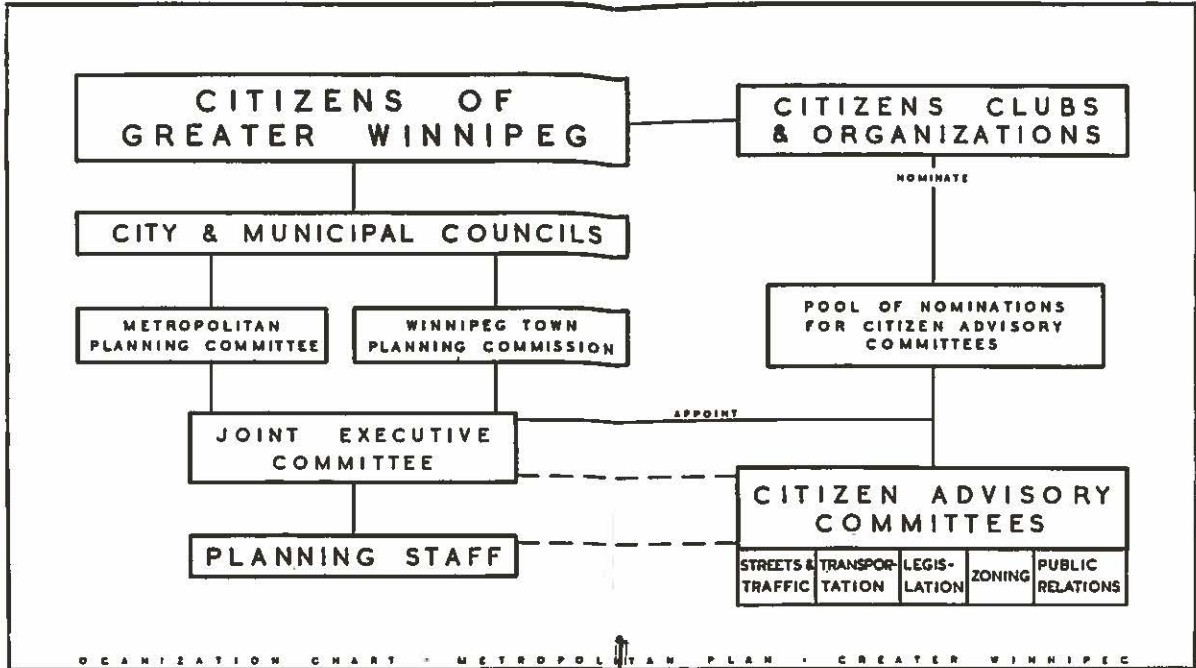
Less Attractive Side

Nothing valuable is had without a price. Citizen advisory committees cannot honestly be said to seem at every hour of every day an unmitigated blessing to the official board or the technical staff. I have already mentioned their effect upon the timetable of work. Committees are composed of busy people, and they can meet only once or twice a week. We have seen five months go by while a citizen committee worked over a particularly complicated part of the planning work, week by week. And while we value the various points of view and interest present in every committee, still much time may be consumed in their resolution, even under the best possible chairmanship. Most citizen committees can meet only after office hours, which puts an added load upon a loyal staff. Every committee meeting requires preparatory and following clerical and technical work. In our case the fact that we have the Metropolitan Planning Committee, the City of Winnipeg Town Planning Commission, and (from both) a Joint Executive Committee increases both the available wisdom and the necessary overtime and paper. The metropolitan area of 192 square miles comprises 12 municipalities of varying size, and ap-

LEFT: Winnipeg draws much of its economic life from the Canadian transcontinental travel systems; but they in turn pose planning problems. This airview from the Northwest shows a part of the largest private train-yard in the world. (Photo: N.F.B.)

CENTRE: The relationship between the metropolitan public and the committees described in Eric Thrift's article.

RIGHT: Twelve municipalities share in the Metropolitan Plan. They are: Assiniboia, Brooklands, Charleswood, East Kildonan, Fort Garry, St. Boniface, St. James, St. Vital, Transcona, Tuxedo, West Kildonan and Winnipeg. This map shows the developed areas in hatched tones, and the main barriers to free movement (rivers, railyards, etc.) in black. Beyond the metropolitan boundary is the one-mile grid. (Charts by Metropolitan Plan of Greater Winnipeg).



preciable agricultural land. In certain circumstances the office may be asked for special help by any of these municipal Councils. To do our job we must keep in close touch with them all. Yet I think the balance is by far in favour of the citizen advisory committee way to a better-built community.

Conclusion

There has been an official view prevalent about the relation of citizens to planning for a long time, which we try very hard to avoid. It is the habit of mind exhibited in 'selling planning to the public' or of 'selling' a specific scheme by one means or another. There have been organizations to promote planning, to educate the public on the benefits, to inform the public on the merits of a Plan—but seldom to get people to share in planning, and to co-ordinate the bits of planning they are already doing. Here as I see it is the job of CPAC.

All too often the 'expert' makes his surveys and studies, prepares a Plan, then brings it forth for the approval and support of the 'citizens'. How much better to get citizens and specialists working together on the development of the community! As Stuart Chapin, formerly of TVA, said in a recent issue of *Social Forces*:

"Very often in references to John Q. Citizen in the literature of the planning field there is a tendency to convey the impression that John Q. is a kind of confused and inarticulate character out of a Steig cartoon who needs help and guidance, an individual to be influenced for his own good and to be led by the hand—all in the interests of expediting plans."

I do not suggest for a moment that we have a pat solution or formula to counter this tendency, but I think we have made a beginning—and that citizen-

specialist collaboration is something on which we should do further work. The citizens' place is fundamental to the success, not of planning or of plans, but to the realization of the underlying goals: better places to live, to work, and to enjoy our leisure in good health, prosperity and satisfying surroundings. A public report by the Planning Board of St. Paul, Minnesota, reads:

"City Planning is not a Genius Bending Over a Drafting Board, and dispensing perfect plans to the multitude. The trained city planner performs important technical and executive services, but the central function of the planning agency is to serve as a table around which the city's people submit their multifold projects and desires so that there may be mapped out mutually satisfactory ways of satisfying them."

The pounds of documents flowing from the planning office are the more significant when they are the work of many minds. Because they record the intentions of many citizens, rather than a few hirelings, these flowing pounds of ideas are the more likely to be wrought into the remoulded tons of the metropolitan fabric itself. And that is what all who are interested in the results of community planning look to see.

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houses for family living

Gutheim, Frederick
Houses for family living. New York, the Woman's Foundation Inc. (10 E. 40 St.) 1948. (\$.35; in quantities of 15 or more, \$.20 each).

This is not just another booklet about the way someone thinks you want your house to look. It is something much rarer: a study in short compass of the things that healthy North American families try to do, in all the years from their formation to their dissolution, in and around their abodes. The description is rather like those in Dr. Arnold Gesell's books on the pre-school child. We are given a somewhat anthropological outline, with graphic sidelights, of the culture of the twentieth century American family—in the early childless years, in the crowded years until the youngest child is in school, in the peak years until he is through school, and in the increasing, final quiet years when the parent couple is again alone. A few quotations dealing with this modern family's needs outside the house may indicate how full of good sense the booklet is; by the way, they contain a note from the anthropologists to the authors of zoning codes.

We have to think now about the community outside the house as well as the house itself. Look for variety. You will depend increasingly on the community for many things, and the time will come later when you will want to give back in return. From the community you will get medical care, baby sitters, occasional help in the home, shopping and other services, schools, social organization, amusements, and other things. In the beginning it may not be so important to be on a bus line; but, unless you plan to become a two-car family, it is a thing you should consider. You may think that one store a few blocks away will provide all you need, but the time will come in such a location when getting your hair done or taking a child to the dentist will seem like a major undertaking.

The community that has variety is more likely to accommodate your many and changing requirements than one which is an arid wilderness of fancy houses

in park-like settings. Variety of experience for growing children is important, too. Most of our city planning and zoning ideas work rather toward uniformity than variety. There is an old idea that variety threatens property values. We are always hearing about glue factories being built next to houses in unplanned and unzoned communities; but in the future we are going to hear a great deal more about the importance of well-planned and well-located shopping centres in what are now exclusively residential neighborhoods, and even of the desirability of small, clean, light industries in the same areas.

We are working toward the idea of cities composed of balanced neighborhood units. It should be possible for many families to live, and go to school, and even to work in such a neighborhood. The old central city becomes an occasionally used service area for specialized shopping, amusements, and special kinds of work. This is what many city planners think. Other people criticize the suburbs we have built, and are working toward a neighborhood "where people can know each other as wholes and not merely as functional fragments." It all adds up to balance and variety.

One modern development that embraces some of these values (perhaps as many of them as can be included in a relatively small housing development for 500 families) is that in Bannockburn, Maryland. Here in one big super-block the developers plan four tall apartment buildings, in which they expect the tenants will be mainly young couples without children, or older families whose children have grown up. Around the apartment buildings there are a great variety of row houses, double houses, and detached houses for larger families. In the community is a shopping center, a recreation area, a nursery school, and a place for community gatherings and activities. A school is nearby. This community is planned to accommodate almost all the things people want and should have in their neighborhoods. Here is a neighborhood in which you can move easily from one house or apartment to another as your family requirements change, without having to move to a different part of town. In an unstable world this element of continuity is an important value.

The relationship between the house and the community is so close it will never be possible to solve all the living problems of the new American family within the four walls of the house alone. But it should be possible to cut down the six moves made by the typical family in the course of its career by almost half.

southwestern ontario conference

A Conference of Planning Boards and Committees of Southwestern Ontario was held in London, Ontario, February 18-19, 1948. Over 150 delegates attended the Conference representing forty municipalities in the area.

The Conference was designed primarily for those municipalities who are in the process of organizing planning boards and committees or are just beginning their planning work.

Topics discussed were as follows: "Setting up a Planning Area" (as provided for in the Ontario Planning Act), "What is an Official Plan?", "How are Official Plans Developed?", "Urban and Suburban Zoning Problems" and "Subdivision Regulations". The amount of enthusiastic discussion from the floor testified as to the success of the Conference.

The Honourable Dana Porter, Minister of Planning and Development, addressed the delegates at their Dinner. Exhibits of the planning work which has been done in the various municipalities were on display.

Many Members of CPAC took part in the Conference, and copies of LAYOUT FOR LIVING were available to the delegates. The Vice President, Mr. Carver, spoke on the potential aid to official planning through voluntary CPAC activity.

It is intended to hold a similar Conference next year, and the date set is March 2-3, 1949. One of the main problems which will be discussed at next year's Conference will be that of suburban planning, as this is of vital importance to most of the municipalities in Southwestern Ontario.

other conferences and courses

Community Planning Conferences in Canadian Regions

The City of Quebec Branch of CPAC held a Planning Week from March 15th to 20th. A fuller report will appear in our next issue. The British Columbia Division is planning a conference in Vancouver, probably in June. The Ontario Division of CPAC intends to hold a regional conference toward the end of September. Watch LAYOUT FOR LIVING for further details of these conferences.

Other Canadian Conferences

Readers of LAYOUT FOR LIVING are referred to the March 1948 issue of Food for Thought which contains a list of Canadian conferences to be held in the next few months. Of particular interest are those of the Canadian Federation of Home and School (Winnipeg, September 28-30), The Institute of Public Affairs (Geneva Park, Ontario, August 14-21), and the School of Community Programs (Morin Heights, Quebec, August 13-23).

McGill University Geography Summer School

Stanstead College, Stanstead, Quebec: July 5 to August 14, 1948. Graduate course includes Regional Planning and Technique of Area Studies; undergraduate courses in a number of geographic and related subjects. Lecturers include Professor Stamp on London, Dr. Odell of Cambridge, Professor Coulter of Cincinnati, Sir Hubert Wilkins and V. Stefansson, as well as members of a number of Canadian University faculties. For further information apply to the Director, Geography Summer School, Arts Building, McGill University, Montreal.

International Federation for Housing and Town Planning

Ninth International Congress, Zurich, Switzerland: June 20 to 26, 1948. Sessions on the financing and techniques of housing; regional and national planning; land-use control and ownership rights; neighbourhood planning; training the planning team, etc. For further information address the Secretary, International Federation for Housing and Town Planning, 13 Suffolk Street, Haymarket, London, England.

progress report:
smaller communities in the u.s.

Town planning, as any student of the subject knows, has been largely a matter of theory in the United States. Examples of planned communities are so rare as to be classic; discussions, treatises and books, symposia and exhibits, have had to satisfy those who would rather see concrete results.

A number of recent planning studies for small communities and minor regions may mark a break in the impasse. In our present mood, there does not seem to be much chance for any great regional planning projects on the TVA scale. The growth of the large urban centres seems to remain largely a matter of expediency. Under those circumstances, it is hopeful, and perhaps significant, to find towns like Fairfield, Connecticut, and Harrison, New York, engaging competent planning consultants to prepare studies for them.

Granted that these are isolated, tentative efforts; they still indicate that local citizens are interested in studying the growth of their towns, and the relation of their areas to adjacent ones. The possibilities in this grass-roots approach to planning are so great that it is worth examining some of the studies to see what the procedure is.

Typical is a study for the Sewickley District in Alleghany County, Pennsylvania. Four adjacent boroughs collaborated in sponsoring the project, as the Sewickley District Planning Association. The report, for this rather wealthy residential area near Pittsburgh, is a model of analysis; the recommended program is divided into 'immediate steps' and 'long-term plan'. Some parts of the report are extremely quotable. For example:

Realization: No 'plan' can be carried through without the will of the people of a community. A sound plan will be of benefit in one way or another to all. All must be represented in the long-range councils: rich, poor, white, coloured, tenants, landlords.

Housing: The substandard housing or blighted conditions that are in evidence in Sewickley Borough should be of sufficient concern for the community to take action to eliminate them. The failure of the community to prevent the development of such housing is no reason that it should be ignored. Not only are these housing conditions a drain on public finance; they are cancerous growths that affect adjacent properties and even neighbourhood areas.

Zoning: The rehabilitation of blighted neighbourhoods requires far more than zoning regulations... The improvement of (a substandard area) can only be made by a redesign of the neighbourhood, wholesale land acquisition for housing, private or public, or for such public purposes as recreation areas. Zoning becomes simply one of a number of instruments in the process of a redevelopment program.

Subdivision Control: Subdivision is the process of using raw land in the design and development of new urban centres. Considerations determining the subdivision design, at the moment, such as amount of profit or cost of engineering, will frequently determine lot sizes, loca-

tions and widths of streets, and location and size of water and sanitary utilities which, so far as the basic pattern is concerned, will remain substantially the same from then on. These initial considerations eventually lose much of their significance, but good or bad, the community must live with the results... Poor subdivision design is therefore a first step toward the creation of substandard housing.

A 'pilot study' for the town of Fairfield, Connecticut typifies the work being done by Technical Planning Associates. The brochure which has been issued studies in general terms the background of the town and the region, traffic problems, industry, residential neighbourhoods, zoning, and subdivision control. It advises on how to set up a capital budget, and how to develop a master plan. It concludes by pointing out that the study that has been made is simply a preliminary, and that "the next step is to study these problems in greater detail, giving all who are interested a chance to contribute their ideas... The 'Master Plan' must always be flexible enough so that changes can be made to meet new conditions. It will not be adopted all at once, for some parts will take definite form earlier than others. However, it will at all times represent the best thinking of the town about its own future."

It is interesting to note that in the Sewickley study an economist (Homer Hoyt) and a town planner (Carl Gudat) worked with architects Churchill and Fulmer. The group that calls itself Technical Planning Associates includes a city planner, an engineer, an attorney, a land architect, and three architects... This sort of teamwork is proving highly successful in these and other instances.

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The object of the Association is "to foster public understanding of, and participation in, community planning in Canada". Much of the effort for orderly community development must be locally centred. Members in any province are therefore encouraged to form a Provincial Division, and within it to form local Branches of the Association.

The Secretary of the Ontario Division is now Miss Leslie Florence, 2 Sultan Street, Toronto. The names and addresses of the Secretaries of other Divisions were published in LAYOUT FOR LIVING No. 12 (February 1948) and are available on application to the National Office.

Please make cheques or money orders payable at par to:
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OF CANADA

As of January 1st, 1948 all membership fees received from provinces where Divisions are established will be put at the disposal of those Divisions. New Members will receive back copies of LAYOUT FOR LIVING to include all published in the present fiscal year, so long as the supply lasts.

books received

Canada. Department of Agriculture
The market for farm products in the town of Smiths Falls, by P. J. Thair. ("The agricultural production of... the 'trading area' in relation to the fresh food requirements of the town.") Ottawa, Marketing Service, Economics Division, Department of Agriculture, 1946.

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Memorandum of procedure with respect to the application of approval of plans of subdivision. Toronto, King's Printer, 1947.
Reprint pamphlet: Urgency of planning: Unplanned housing will raise your taxes: Rural interest in planning: Condensed report of planning committee of American Public Works Association. Toronto, King's Printer, 1948.
Memorandum to municipal clerks re restricted area (zoning) by-laws. Toronto, the Department, 1948.

Vancouver. Town Planning Commission
A preliminary report upon the major street plan. 1917, the Commission.

United States. Federal Housing Administration
Neighbourhoods built for rental housing: examples of rental housing developments built and financed by private enterprise with mortgages insured by FHA. (Land planning bulletin no. 4.) Washington, Superintendent of Documents, 1947. (\$.15)

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New Westminster, B.C. IN Canadian Geographical Journal, vol. XXXVI, no. 1 (January, 1948).

Taylor, E. G. R.
Land and plan: basic facts relative to a master plan for Britain. London, Architect and Building News, 1947.

Stamp, L. Dudley
The land of Britain and how it is used. London, Longmans (for the British Council), 1946.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

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